ses defended at universities include: "ESP and Imagery in the Sighted and the Blind," by Frances Gonzales Scarano (master's thesis—JFK University, Orinda, CA); "New Explorations in the Realm of the Mind," by Anjum Khilji (doctoral dissertation—University of Punjab, Pakistan); "The institutionalization of parapsychology: A study of innovation in science," by Michael D. Gordon (master's thesis—University of Manchester, England); and "Psychological perspectives on psi phenomena," by Jeffrey R. Munson (University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa).[14]

Parapsychology is a relatively young discipline. Although there is a great need for qualified researchers, one may encounter difficulty breaking into the field. Project funding is difficult to obtain. Competition for grants is stiff. Salaries are low. But for those who are concerned with discovering the truth, parapsychology offers many challenges and opportunities.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Shanti R. Krishna. "A Review of the PA India Conference." *Journal of Parapsychology*, Vol. 49, September 1985, pp. 251-53.
2. "Glossary," *The Journal of Parapsychology*, Vol. 35, December 1988, p. 376.
3. Letter from Dr. J.G. Pratt, Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of Virginia School of Medicine, March 30, 1972.
4. Kahn, Samuel. *Introduction to Parapsychology*. New York: Vantage Press, 1965.
5. "Educational Opportunities in Parapsychology," *Bulletin of the Parapsychological Association*, Vol. 3, April 1970.
6. Ibid.
7. Letter from Dr. Ian Stevenson, Carlson Professor of Psychiatry, Department of Psychiatry, University of Virginia, School of Medicine, June 29, 1972.
8. Pratt, March 30, 1972.
9. Letter from Dr. J. B. Rhine, Foundation for Research on the Nature of Man, Durham, N.C., March 23, 1972.
10. Leslie Shepard. *Encyclopedia of Occultism and Parapsychology* Detroit: Gale Research Co; The address for the *Journal of Parapsychology* is Box 6847, College Station, Durham, NC 27708. It is published by Parapsychological Press, a subsidary of the Foundation for Research on the Nature of Man and is an affiliated publication of the Parapsychological Association.
11. Nandor Fodor. *Encyclopaedia of Psychic Science*. University Books, 1966; The Society's address is: The Society for Psychical Research, 1 Adam & Eve Mews, London W8 6UG
12. Ibid. The Society produces a journal known as the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*.
13. At present, an interesting course is being taught at the University of Mississippi. The course, entitled "The Sociology of Psychic Phenomena," is taught by Dr. Joseph Bruening of the school's sociology department.
14. Nancy L. Zingrone. "Parapsychological Dissertations and Theses Abstracts," *Journal of Parapsychology* Vol 49, December 1985, pp. 386-95.

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**In May and June of 1976, numerous sightings of a monster or monsters took place in Maryland. What was the strange creature that was seen by so many? Where did it come from? What did the soldiers carry away in a body bag?**

***Who covered this story up? Why was it covered up?***

*By Mark Chorvinsky and Mark Opsasnick*
Directors, Strange Research and Investigations.

The larger part of Aberdeen Proving Ground is a peninsula jutting into the Chesapeake Bay. On one side is the Bush River, on the other the Gunpowder River. The much smaller Bird River branches off from Gunpowder River, and at the end of Bird River lies the small town of Whitemarsh. Hairy hominids were sighted in 1973 and 1975 in Harford County, Maryland. In the spring of 1976, the southeastern Baltimore County, approximately 15 miles down the Little Gunpowder River, was the scene of a series of confrontations with unknown entities.

Beginning in early May, the communities surrounding the Bird River—Chase, Harewood Park, and Whitemarsh—were plagued with reports of unidentified creatures and one of the great monster flaps in history had begun. *Until now, it was one of the best covered-up flaps as well.*

For several years we have been investigating this incredible monster case and it is proving to be of great importance as it includes the following:

- **Extremely strong sightings and evidence**
- **Admitted (and now denied) cover-ups by law enforcement officials**
- **Investigation of a monster**

**flap by the government**

- **Monster reports by groups of police officers**
- **Illicit toxic chemical dumping**
- **Internal government memos contradicting the "official" story**

As we shall see, there is also the intriguing but unsubstantiated possibility that "above top secret" government experiments may be responsible for some of the monsters reported during the flap.

## BAGGING A MONSTER

The Harewood Food Mart was a popular gathering place. During the 1976 Monster flap, its owner, Wade Bowers, kept close tabs on all of the sightings that took place in the small community. The people of Harewood are certain that Mr. Bowers could tell us of many other sightings during the flap, but when we contacted him recently he declined to be interviewed. We did speak with his brother-in-law, Cleeve Miller, who revealed that Bowers knew of dozens of unpublicized encounters with strange creatures in the area. Miller said that there was one particularly fascinating account.

Dozens of soldiers from the Aberdeen Proving Grounds entered a swamp in Chase in June of 1976, and came out carrying some type of "huge animal" in a body bag. A dozen men were needed to carry the body bag, and another 12 were there to keep spectators away. MPs told spectators, "Back off, back off."

What was in that bag and why were a dozen men needed to carry it? Why has Wade Bowers stopped talking about the case? What interest does the government have in monster sightings?

## DEADLY ENCOUNTER

Sgt. George Brooks still works out of the County's Essex Precinct. He told us of the occasion when a woman living in Harewood Park called the station one evening that May and said she had seen some type of seven-foot ape run through her backyard. When Brooks arrived, he was shocked to find the lady's 90-pound German Shepherd dog freshly torn apart. The body was still warm and lying in a pool of blood. He also found a series of 18-inch-long footprints in the soft soil. As Sgt. Brooks walked toward the wooded area that extends back to the Bird River, he heard the creature run off into the woods, and the characteristic sulfuric odor (he termed it "musky") often associated with monster cases filled the entire area. Moments later he heard an incredible piercing scream which he described as "gorilla-like." This is only one of many sightings





that we have uncovered which occurred during this mind-boggling monster flap.

## THE FIRST COVER-UP: THE POLICE

We think the evidence shows that there was a conscious, systematic cover-up of the 1976 Maryland Monster flap by the Essex Precinct of the Baltimore County Police. We believe that Captain Jack C. Freeland directed the cover-up, and he was successful in keeping most sightings out of the newspapers, including many of the most convincing monster reports. Read what we offer and judge for yourself.

Almost all of the police officials we spoke with admitted that they were instructed to keep their mouths shut during the flap and not discuss the monster sightings. We do not know (and may never know) if the decision to cover up the flap was made by the police or by officials from Aberdeen Proving Grounds or some government agency.

In 1987, 11 years after the flap, we tracked down the man who, we allege, successfully managed the cover-up. We learned that Essex Precinct Capt. Freeland was retired and still didn't really want to talk about the monster encounters. After speaking with him for a while, though, he opened up a bit and was forthcoming

Dozens of soldiers...came out carrying some type of "huge animal" in a body bag. A dozen men were needed to carry the body bag...

with information about cases that, we think, he had covered up ten years earlier. Once again, tenacity proves itself an essential element in monster investigation. The initially resistant Freeland told us about one of the most unusual encounters with a Maryland Monster that occurred during the May flap. A county cab driver reported seeing the creature behind the Hawthorne Plaza Shopping Center, which is located in a residential area. "According to the police officer who took the report, the driver claimed to have seen something that was seven-to-eight-feet tall. It was covered with dark hair. When the cabbie approached it, the thing started throwing trash cans at him," according to Captain Freeland.

Captain Freeland related that during the month of May there had been many more encounters with the strange visitor. Some boys reported seeing the creature walk in a stooped position. An unidentified Harewood Park couple reported seeing the creature near their home and said it smelled like a cesspool. The couple's dog refused to track the beast. One woman claimed to have found a large, flattened grassy area where the creature was believed to have slept, while others reported finding large footprints, trampled gardens, foul odors, and instances where their pet dogs became extremely upset and would not stop barking. Freeland also stated that there were many sightings by residents who were very reluctant to discuss their experiences for fear of ridicule.

Freeland was surprisingly candid. It was then, we allege, he admitted to us that he tried to cover the entire flap up and was generally successful. He openly explained that during the flap he wanted no publicity whatsoever. His reason? "Because the phenomena were so bizarre." From that point on in our conversation, Freeland acted as though he had said too much and declined further comment.

FATE magazine Editor Donald Michael Kraig phoned Captain Jack Freeland on February 27, 1990. "I had asked if there had been a cover-up," Kraig recalls, "and he acted surprised and said, 'No, there was no cover-up at all.' He said that there were many articles that were published and that he wanted to get as much information out as possible."

Thus today, years after our investigation of this strange case, Freeland completely denies being a part of any cover-up and claims that he did his utmost to get these sightings and cases into the newspapers, and says that he assisted investigators in any way





that he could. He now says that he wanted the information to "get out."

Extensive newspaper research into this case by co-author Mark Opsasnick contradicts Freeland's assertions. Opsasnick did a complete search of all the daily Baltimore Papers—the Baltimore *Sun*, Baltimore *News American*, as well as the *Bel Air Aegis* and the *Avenue News* (the local paper covering Essex and Middle River) from 1973-1978. There were only two articles ever published on the entire flap, both in the *News American*. This seems to contradict Freeland's statement to Donald Kraig that he did his "utmost" to get the sightings out to the press. In addition to his misrepresentation of the extent of press coverage of the case, Freeland clearly withheld information from us rather than cooperating openly as he now claims. "Freeland told me that he had a private file on the cases," Opsasnick recalls. "At first he said he would consider letting me see some of the information, but later he refused to send anything. Then, when he was contacted again, he all but hung up on me, saying that he could not give out any more information and that he wanted to keep everything buried in the past."

We have testimony from at least six different officers who still work out of the Essex Precinct claiming that Captain Freeland instructed them not to make any public comments about the Harewood Park Creature, which is why no officer was ever quoted in either of the two newspaper articles. The clear fact is that the great majority of the sightings never got beyond the Essex Precinct and the Baltimore County police.

If Freeland did everything he could to help get the stories out, then why was he not willing to be tape recorded by us during our interview with him? If Freeland was trying hard to get all of the information out, why did we learn of many cases that were reported to the police which were never in the papers? And, if Freeland was so interested in disseminating this information, then why was getting it out of him like pulling teeth? Freeland is back-pedaling now, but during our investigation he admitted the cover-up to us.

Other officers, though, were more forthcoming with information about the flap, and the first-person testimony of police officers who investigated the cases in 1976 is especially important. Luckily, Freeland was far from our only source, and our other informant corroborated that the flap was covered up, as we shall see. Unfortunately, with regard to

police records that could shed some light on this complex case, Lt. Lauman at the Baltimore County Police Records Center in Towson, Maryland, informed us that the log books from the Essex Precinct with the corresponding report numbers were destroyed in 1977, thus leaving the police reports on these encounters haphazardly stored on microfilm and irretrievable by us as we were refused access to any microfilm storage units.

## MEETINGS WITH A MONSTER?

While the cover-up was generally very effective, a few sightings—the tip of the iceberg—did make it into the newspapers. On May 27, 1976, the Baltimore *News American* ran the piece mentioned by Freeland to Kraig, including several interesting cases that occurred during this flap. Richard and Elva Steward, a couple from Harewood Park, claimed that while clearing some brush in a wooded area near their home they heard a large animal of some kind moving farther back in the woods and smelled a sulfur-like odor. Mr. Steward initially thought the creature was a dog and squirted a hose into the woods in an effort to scare the intruder. The creature kept approaching, however, and the Stewards quickly vacated the area.

The *News American* quoted Elva Steward as saying, "I looked back and saw something about eight feet tall with two, big green eyes. I was really scared. I didn't know what it was. Finally it just went back into the woods, making its own path through the bushes and small trees." Elva Steward went on to say that one evening shortly after that first encounter she heard some scratching on her bedroom window screen. Her husband Richard, 31, investigated, but the culprit left behind only a foul stench. The next day Mr. Steward found claw marks on their cellar door and nine feet off the ground on their bedroom screen. He also claimed to have found a shallow cave dug out in a dense patch of brush not far from their house. Neighborhood children reported that they had seen the creature in this area around the time of the Stewards' encounters.

A Harewood Park teenager named Jay Beavers, 15, said that he had seen the creature while he was walking near his home on University Drive. The *News American* quoted him as saying, "It wasn't a bear, it was much taller and it cried like a cat. The thing ran when it saw me. I could smell it. The animal had real long arms that sort of swung when it got away." Beavers alerted some area residents and a search party





scoured the wooded area where the creature was seen. Nothing was found.

## SEASON OF THE MONSTER:

### *Police Recollections of the 1976 Flap*

Throughout much of 1986 and 1987, we interviewed dozens of past and present Baltimore County police officials, all of whom had worked out of the Essex Precinct during the 1976 flap. With a distance of ten years since the monster flap, police felt free to talk about the incredible events that had been so effectively covered up. Many cases came to light, most of them involving the police.

• Perhaps the strongest May 1976 sighting took place when Baltimore County police officer Gordon Clark and a partner who has requested anonymity actually saw the beast while they were driving down Harewood Road one evening. Officer Clark initially saw the creature as it stood on the side of the road rummaging through some garbage cans. The squad car slowed down. The officers came within 30 yards of the entity when the creature dashed across the road on two legs and ran off into the woods. We spoke with Clark and his partner and both vividly remember the experience. Officer Clark told us, "I got a good, clear look at the thing. It was not a bear; it was not a deer. It was definitely on two legs, covered with hair, and it moved quick. It was graceful. You could tell it was some kind of animal. I really don't know what it was." His partner added, "Whatever it was, it was giant. That thing was at least eight feet tall and had to be 500 pounds. This animal was really out there."

• In one of the earliest sightings, a married couple saw the creature enter a house-like pumping station located on the railroad tracks across from the Harewood Park housing development. They called the

Essex Precinct, and Officer Ricky Roberts responded. Although the creature had left by the time police had arrived on the scene, Mr. Roberts recalled that a horrible stench filled the air surrounding the small station structure.

• Detective Stuart Sardeson was sent to investigate a sighting a few miles away at a marsh in Gunpowder Falls State Park and was hit by a sulfur-like odor so noxious that it made his eyes water.

• An elderly man was riding his bike at 8:45 P.M. when he saw a strange beast standing in the woods at the intersection of Earls Road and Ebenezer Road in Whitemarsh. Patrolman Gene Rayburn investigated and found a path mashed down through the brush. An almost unbearable sulfur-like smell permeated the air.

• Patrolmen James Holthaus and Jeff Shanks responded to a nighttime call from a young couple who said they saw a huge Bigfoot-type creature standing in the middle of a construction area. The officers arrived in time to hear something huge moving in the dark woods. The two men were stunned by a horrible odor. "Then we heard it scream. It couldn't have been more than 50 feet back in the woods. Those people were telling the truth. There was definitely something out there. I heard it myself," Officer Holthaus told us. The creature had emitted a loud, high-pitched wail.

• Sgt. Brooks told us that K-9 units were called out on several occasions to track the creature—once when a group of Harewood Park residents chased the creature into a marsh and on another occasion when the beast was tracked to the large drainage tunnels where the Little Gunpowder River flows under the I-95 highway. These are the same tunnels where at least two separate sets of Baltimore County police officers saw the monster. According to Officer Holthaus, "Some of the other officers went hunting for it off duty, and I personally heard several of them say they had seen it not far from Harewood Park on the [Bird] River."

• Sgt. Brooks also related that in early June a truck driver wrecked his tractor-trailer when he swerved to miss an eight- or nine-foot-tall "hairy thing" which had run in front of him on the Pulaski Highway (Rt. 40) in Whitemarsh.

All of these possible sightings occurred in mid-May 1976, and in each case descriptions of the beast were nearly identical: close to eight feet tall, covered with dark hair, and moving upright on two legs.

Even the most skeptical investigator would find it difficult to disagree with the assertion that





something very unusual seemed to have been on the loose in May 1976 in the housing developments near Aberdeen Proving Grounds.

## MONSTER ISLAND

Tom Sobotka is a crabber in Whitemarsh, near the Aberdeen Proving Grounds. He has some incredible claims to make about creatures that may exist in the area around Poole Island on the Bird River, an army research site. The only occasion that the bizarre Bird River sightings came to the attention of the public was when The Washington *Post* published an article on monsters in their *Potomac Magazine* section on October 10, 1976. They included some very provocative statements by Tom Sobotka, statements which gain in credibility when considered in light of the information that we have uncovered about the Aberdeen-area monster flap.

Sobotka, who had been on a Navy Underwater and Demolition Team in Viet Nam, often dives in the Chesapeake Bay. He talks about "tunnels that start way down deep in the bay and come up in the middle of the swamp." In the tradition of "B" horror film dialogue, but with the edge that only phenomena that could be real has, he confides, "There are things out on the islands off Edgewood that nobody would believe. Nobody goes out there but me. If I told you everything I saw there they'd lock me up..."

If anyone has had an opportunity to observe any unnatural wildlife, it is Tom Sobotka. Most of his waking hours are spent in his crabbing boat, often in the swamps. When he is not on top of the water he is underneath it, diving. Sobotka's father was quoted in the aforementioned Washington *Post* article as saying: "There are a lot of things happening over there at Edgewood we don't know about. Experiments and mutations. They keep it all a secret. But they found an orangutan dead on the railroad tracks near here two months ago. A guard told me that section in there, it's unbelievable, what they got. Human experiments. I tell you the people who work there won't talk about what goes on because they're afraid nobody would believe them."

In 1987, 11 years later, we tracked down Tom Sobotka. After checking out our credentials and being satisfied that we were serious investigators, he began to tell us about himself and some of the extremely strange goings-on in the vicinity. The crabber was not happy with the way he was portrayed in the Washington *Post*, which he felt had made him sound like a kook. We assured

him that we would give him fair treatment and he opened up. Sobotka claimed that he had seen Bigfoot-like creatures numerous times during the 1976 flap.

He believes that they were "mutations" from the nearby Aberdeen Proving Grounds.

In addition to the hairy hominids that he sighted, Sobotka hinted that something very strange was happening on and around an island at the mouth of the Bush River. Suddenly, he asked, "Have you ever seen a fish with deer feet?"

The Whitemarsh crabber grinned slyly. "Look, there's things out there on Poole Island that you wouldn't believe," he said matter-of-factly. "You have to see them for yourself."

Without any prodding, the 43-year old Marylander continued his strange tale. The account was all the stranger for the fact that Sobotka's parents sat around the table listening and agreeing with their son, nodding in affirmation to tales of mutant fish and bizarre experimentation. We might as well have been discussing the weather.

"They're doing all types of experiments with all types of animals and it's all on this island," he told us.

Sobotka wanted to take us to Poole Island in a small boat—all we had to do was pay for the gas. A small price for a glimpse of the Maryland Mutations!

"Get your camera ready and I'll keep the engine going and be ready to run. Because they're there," Sobotka explained.

There was a big hitch—civilians are not allowed on this island. The area is restricted and, as Sobotka put it, "If they catch us, they will throw us in jail and no one will ever see us again. Aberdeen has a security network that you wouldn't believe." As we never knowingly break any state, municipal, federal, or international laws when on investigations, we unfortunately could not take Sobotka up on his offer to prowl the restricted government facility.

### BLACK SHINY SHOES

It is not accurate to say that Tom Sobotka was harassed by government officials—he was not. But he was visited and questioned by them. According to Sobotka, people from Aberdeen Proving Grounds kept asking him questions. Strange men would come to the door and not identify themselves. They all had one thing in common: they all wore black shiny shoes. Ufologists will recognize this detail from the many cases of post-UFO sighting visits to witnesses by unnamed government officials.

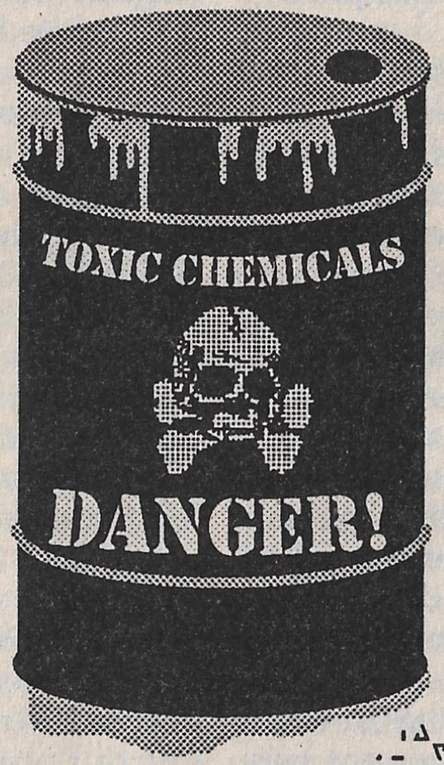
The government people had





let them alone recently. Tom Sobotka told them that he wasn't going out near Poole Island any more.

The government was involved. What government? Officers of the Essex Precinct did tell us that "the government was very interested in what was going on down here." That "the government" was involved with the monster cases is borne out in Sgt. Brooks' testimony. He relates that there were problems in the investigation because "government investigators were uncooperative with county police." Perhaps in future research and investigation we will learn more about this ambiguous aspect of the Maryland Monster flap and cover-up.




### TOXIC CHEMICALS RELEASED

Tom Sobotka's talk of mutation led us into an investigation of a possible source of mutations in the area of the monster flap: mutagenic chemicals. The scenario: 20 large, dark tanks sit corroding in the baking Maryland summer Sun. Many of them leak, and no grass grows in the path of the rivulet of noxious-smelling liquid that seeps from the tanks. The toxic chemical flows down to a stream, poisoning some animals and changing others in strange ways. Some of the animals are born as monsters due to the mutagenic, mutation-inducing chemicals in some of the tanks. Unfortunately, this strange scenario, which sounds like the opening scene in a horror film, may have already occurred in Maryland.

We have uncovered a great deal of evidence from a wide variety of sources, which indicates that the Aberdeen Proving Grounds' Chemical Research, Developing and Engineering Center (CRDEC) was releasing dangerous chemicals into the Aberdeen environment for years.

On May 4, 1986, a front-page article in The Baltimore *Sun* (Robert Benjamin, "Aberdeen Safety is Disputed") reported that documents obtained through the

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Freedom of Information Act clearly demonstrated the unsafe and unhealthy conditions of the plant. Harford County elected officials publicly questioned the credibility of the army's denials that toxic chemicals were being handled dangerously. Army documents and state records contradict the army's assertion that chemicals were handled safely at the plant.

## WIDESPREAD LEAKS

While the army claimed that the plant was intensively monitored and adhered to environmental protection laws, the findings of the Inspector General's investigation in 1985 listed 13 safety problems at the facility. One violation was described as "excessive storage of hazardous chemicals inside and outside the building."

A second inspector general's investigation was conducted in 1986 after the 1985 disclosures about the plant came to light. This 1986 probe concluded that neither Aberdeen Proving Ground's environmental management personnel nor CRDEC monitored the use of toxic and mutagenic chemicals at the plant. The probe also revealed that there are no records of the chemicals that had been disposed of at the plant. Furthermore, the probe uncovered real proof that "at times unknown chemicals had been dumped down the plant's sump drains and ultimately into the post's sewers." The 1986 investigation reported also that an independent study done in 1985 "identified the lack of chemical monitoring of effluent lines; a general overall problem with the accountability of chemicals, and a lack of audit capability for chemicals." In other words, independent investigators completely corroborated the 1986 Investigator General's probe—no one was keeping track of chemicals in the facility and what was going into the sewers, out into the area surrounding the Aberdeen Proving Grounds.

Some of the toxic and mutagenic chemicals used at the plant include perchlorethylene, tri-isopropyl phosphite, DF, and pinacolyl alcohol. Leaking drums of the toxic chemicals DF and DC were found by inspectors on five occasions.

In 1983, 20 55-gallon drums of the toxic chemical NM (domethyl polysulfide) were stored in a fourth floor lab when the roof collapsed. Many of the drums were smashed open and left sitting where they lay for two years. The Baltimore *Sun* described an incident in which, according to army documents, some of the liquid seeped through a drain into the plant's sumps.

The army closed the deteriorating chemical weapons research plant in March, 1986.

Since our investigation of this began, there has been mainstream recognition of the government cover-up of the dangers of toxic chemical negligence.

The notion of a monster created as a result of toxic chemicals in the environment has been depicted in such films as *Prophecy* and *Slithis*, and there are signs that this sub-genre of horror films may be proliferating. Is art imitating life, or is popular culture reflecting fears of the nightmare of toxic waste dumping?

## STRANGE POSSIBILITIES

Most mutations will not come about as a result of mutagenic chemicals but rather due to genetic experimentation. The 1976 flap took place before the current technology for genetic engineering. Therefore, rather than a genetically-engineered mutation, it is more probable that fertilization of a human ovum by non-human primate sperm or vice versa may have been accomplished.

Another possible, albeit outré, explanation is that some type of secret primate research involving human-animal interbreeding may have been in progress. This sounds like the stuff of mad scientist films, but it has been suggested as a serious possibility by a former director of Yerkes Primate Institute. As bizarre as this sounds, it has supposedly been attempted in China and there is at least one case in our files in which a human-ape breed-ing attempt was thwarted at the last minute.

Was a human-ape hybrid created by the military? Did it escape from Aberdeen Proving Grounds into the surrounding woods and was it brought back in a body bag by a dozen military police, as described earlier in this article?

Or was the creature sighted by so many an escaped research primate? Tom Sobotka's father talked about a dead orangutan found near his property. Did the creature(s) escape from the Pooles Island research facility?

There are many speculations that can be made, but the bottom line is that there were Bigfoot-type sightings with a high level of credibility occurring during May and June of 1976 in the Whitemarsh, Maryland Area. According to numerous witnesses, including several groups of Baltimore County police officers, something bizarre was on the loose in Maryland in 1976. For all intents and purposes, it was successfully covered up by the authorities.

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